



Utility company's proposal to rat out hidden marijuana operations to police raises privacy concerns

By DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

BANGOR, Maine (AP) — Operators of illegal marijuana grow enterprises hidden inside rural homes in Maine don't have to worry much about prying neighbors. But their staggering electric bills may give rise to a new snitch. An electric utility made an unusual proposal to help law enforcement target these illicit operations, which are being investigated for ties to transnational crime. Critics, however, worry the move would violate customers' privacy. More than a dozen states that legalized marijuana have seen a spike in illegal marijuana grow operations that utilize massive amounts of electricity. And Maine's Versant Power has been receiving subpoenas — sometimes for 50 locations at a time — from law enforcement, said Arrian Myrick-Stockdell, corporate counsel.



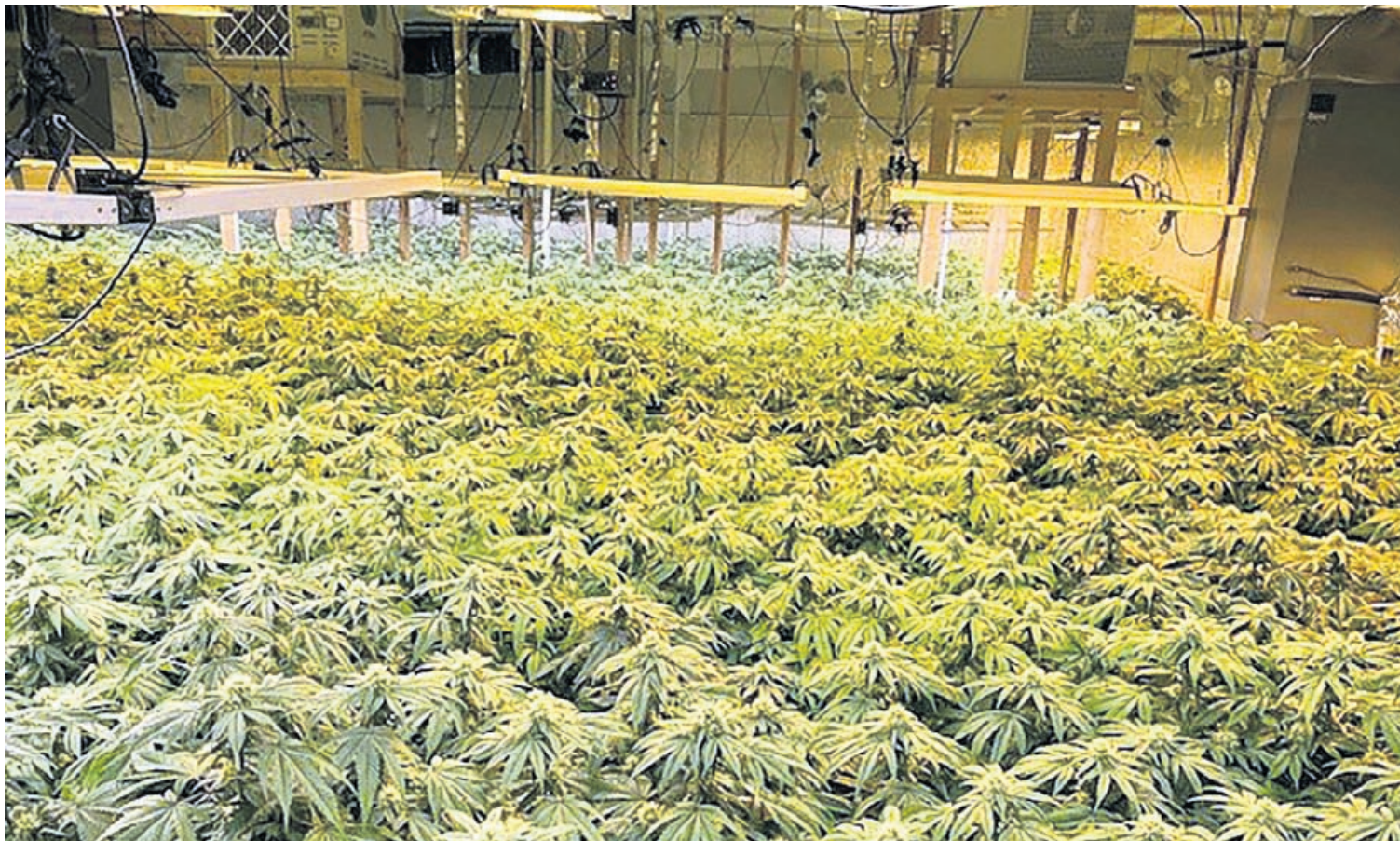
This image provided by the Somerset County, Maine, Sheriff's Office, shows a rural home that was converted into a sophisticated marijuana grow operation on May 17, 2024, in Norridgewock, Maine.

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This image provided by the Somerset County, Maine, Sheriff's Office, shows a rural home that was converted into a sophisticated marijuana grow operation on May 17, 2024, in Norridgewock, Maine.

Associated Press

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It'd be far more efficient, he suggested to utility regulators, to flip the script and allow electric utilities to report their suspicions to law enforcement.

"Versant has a very high success rate in being able to identify these locations, but we have no ability to communicate with law enforcement proactively," Myrick-Stockdell told commissioners.

The proposal, to be deliberated next week by the Maine Public Utilities Commission, is being criticized by consumer privacy advocates and others who think the utility is veering outside its lane.

The nonprofit Electronic Privacy Information Center believes such a regulatory rule would be unconstitutional because the electric utility would be allowed to provide private information about consumers with "no probable cause, no warrant, no judicial review," Alan Butler, the group's executive director, told The Associated Press.

The Washington-based group has never heard of a proposal like this, he said,

though federal courts have authorized the sharing of consumer data from so-called "smart" electric meters for the limited purposes of managing the power grid.

Jay Stanley, an American Civil Liberties Union privacy expert, compared a utility combing through customer data to an illegal dragnet. "Utilities should not be doing that. They have a duty of protecting their customers' privacy," he said.

Historically, the courts have given special privacy protections for what happens inside a home.

The U.S. Supreme Court in 2001 ruled that federal agents' use of thermal-imaging equipment without a search warrant to detect heat from marijuana grow lights inside an Oregon man's home was unconstitutional.

The Maine utility regulatory proceeding comes as law enforcement officials target marijuana grow operations in which rural homes are purchased, gutted and transformed into sophisticated, high-yield indoor farms.

All told, 20 states have been dealing with phenomena

similar to what's happening in Maine.

The common denominator is that criminals appear to be taking advantage of laws legalizing marijuana in an attempt to fly under the radar to produce marijuana that's sold in states where cannabis is illegal. The FBI and Drug Enforcement Administration are investigating any ties these operations might have to criminal syndicates including Chinese organized crime.

In Oklahoma, farms, empty nursing homes, bowling alleys and warehouses were transformed into marijuana production operations after voters legalized cannabis for medical use in 2018. Police began cracking down after realizing straw owners in China and Mexico were running many of the licensed operations, said Mark Woodward, spokesperson for the Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics.

In Maine, it looks different with purchases of low-price homes in off-the-beaten-path locations, installations of power-hungry grow equipment and upgraded electrical service to support the operations. Police have

taken note of that power consumption. At one of the homes busted in Maine, the monthly electric bill grew from about \$300 to nearly \$9,000, according to court documents. There were more than 100 of them at one point.

The grow houses operate according to a similar playbook regarding the kinds of residences used and interior set-ups with powerful lights, climate control and chemicals. However, they're not linked together like a typical franchise arrangement, making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to link them to a single syndicate, Assistant U.S. Attorney Andrew Lizotte told The Associated Press.

In Somerset County, Sheriff Dale Lancaster, whose deputies have executed search warrants on 21 marijuana operations, said law enforcement works best with community support, and he described Versant's proposal as a "good first step."

Republican Sen. Susan Collins, who has aggressively pressed the FBI about the illegal marijuana operations, also supports Versant's ef-

forts to be an ally with law enforcement agencies. "Cooperation between Maine's electric companies and law enforcement could be of tremendous help to the county sheriffs and other officials who have been working tirelessly to target these illegal grow operations," she said. Versant's proposal was discussed by the Maine Public Utilities Commission earlier this year. Versant pointed out safety concerns for its workers and the public, including potential fires from overheated equipment caused by improper customer installations. Some workers have noted electric meters that were too hot to touch at the illicit operations.

Derek Davidson, a member of the commission staff, mused about the possibility of a threshold for reporting electric consumption spikes to police, but noted that there are sometimes legitimate users "who just have astronomical usage." Mark Morissette from Central Maine Power said it "seems like an eerie line to even consider crossing" and backed his call for caution with an example of a 100-fold increase in electricity consumption after a flood, which necessitated temporary heaters and fans to dry it out.

CMP, the state's largest electric utility, now formally opposes the change but will continue to fully cooperate with law enforcement if customer information is requested through subpoena, said spokesperson Jonathan Breed.

Maine Public Advocate William Harwood is also against the proposal, arguing there are too many legitimate reasons for growing customer consumption such as the installation of heat pumps and electric vehicle charging stations. "We believe that utilities should focus on consumer needs and service to consumers, rather than alerting law enforcement to questionable customer behavior," he said. □

U.S. abortion numbers have risen slightly since Roe was overturned, study finds

By GEOFF MULVIHILL and
KIMBERLEE KRUESI
Associated Press

The number of women getting abortions in the U.S. actually went up in the first three months of 2024 compared with before the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, a report released Wednesday found, reflecting the lengths that Democratic-controlled states went to expand access.

A major reason for the increase is that some Democratic-controlled states enacted laws to protect doctors who use telemedicine to see patients in places that have abortion bans, according to the quarterly #WeCount report for the Society of Family Planning, which supports abortion access.

The data comes ahead of November elections in which abortion-rights supporters hope the issue will drive voters to the polls. In some places, voters will have a chance to enshrine or reject state-level abortion protections.

Fallout from the Supreme Court's June 2022 ruling in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* has remade the way abortion works across the country. The #WeCount data, which has been collected in a monthly survey since April 2022, shows how those providing and seeking abortion have adapted to changing laws.

The survey found that the number of abortions fell to nearly zero in states that ban abortion in all stages of pregnancy and declined by about half in places that ban it after six weeks of pregnancy, before many women know they are pregnant. Fourteen states are enforcing bans on abortion at all stages of pregnancy, with some exceptions, and four others bar it after about six weeks of pregnancy.

Numbers went up in places where abortion remains legal until further into pregnancy — and especially in states such as Illinois, Kansas and New Mexico, which



Krista Bywater shows her eight-months-pregnant belly during an abortion advocacy rally outside the Supreme Court, May 14, 2022, in Washington.

Associated Press

border states with bans.

The report estimates that if not for the post-Dobbs bans, there would have been about 9,900 more abortions per month and 208,000 total since in those states. The numbers were up by more than 2,600 per month in Illinois, about 1,300 in Virginia, 1,200 in Kansas and more than 500 in New Mexico. Abortion pills and telemedicine play a key role. In March, doctors in states with laws to protect medical providers used telemedicine to prescribe abortion pills to nearly 10,000 patients in states with bans or restrictions on abortion by telehealth accounting for about 1 in 10 abortions in the U.S.

Laws to protect medical providers who use telemedicine to prescribe abortion pills started taking effect in some Democratic-controlled states last year.

"It eases the burden on clinics," said Ushma Upadhyay, a University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine professor who co-leads #WeCount. "So it creates more space for the people who are coming to clinics."

Abortion opponents say the fight over the abortion drug mifepristone isn't over after a narrow Supreme

Court ruling that preserved access to it for now. But so far there have not been legal challenges to shield laws.

The latest edition of the survey covers the first three months of this year, when it counted an average of just under 99,000 abortions per month, compared with 84,000 in the two months before Dobbs. January was the first time since the survey began that it has counted more than 100,000 abortions across the country in a single month.

The tracking effort collects monthly data from providers across the country, creating a snapshot of abortion trends. In some states, a portion of the data is estimated. The effort makes data public with less than a six-month lag, giving a picture of trends far faster than annual reports from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, where the most recent report covers abortion in 2021. Before the shield laws began kicking in and #WeCount started tallying them, people were still getting some pills in places with bans.

One of the states where abortions increased was Florida. That changed in April, when a ban after six weeks' gestation took ef-

fect. The data doesn't yet reflect that change.

The policy could change again through a November ballot measure that would make abortion legal until viability, generally considered to be around 23 or 24 weeks into pregnancy. It needs at least 60% approval to be added to the state constitution.

One vote against it will come from Mia Adkins, a 20-year-old senior at Florida International University.

"Instead of pushing for more abortion legal later in pregnancy, we should be pushing for laws that protect these pregnant parents and students and provide them with the support that they need," said Adkins, a senior at Florida International University.

Florida is one of six states where abortion-related measures are already on the ballot. Determinations from elections officials about adding similar questions are pending in four more states. In one, Nebraska, there are dueling amendments: One to allow access until viability and one to keep the current ban on most abortions after 12 weeks of pregnancy. Abortion-rights supporters have prevailed in all seven abortion ballot

questions in the U.S. since 2022. That tracks with public opinion polling that has shown growing support for abortion rights, including a recent Associated Press-NORC poll that found 6 in 10 Americans think their state should allow someone to obtain a legal abortion if they don't want to be pregnant for any reason.

An amendment to protect access could be on the ballot in Arizona, a political battleground state where court cases have swung abortion policy and access since the Dobbs ruling.

The state Supreme Court ruled in April that Arizona should enforce an 1864 ban on abortions at all stages of pregnancy, only for lawmakers to repeal that law. The state's ban on abortion after 15 weeks of pregnancy remains. The ballot measure would expand it to 24 weeks.

Natalie Harper, a 23-year-old independent who usually doesn't vote, said the potential of bringing back the Civil War-era ban "absolutely" impacts her decision to vote for the ballot measure this November. "Seeing that as a possibility really made me realize that everyone's pro-choice voices need to be heard in hopes it never goes in that direction again," she said.

In Missouri, which has outlawed almost all abortions and where nearly none were reported in the new data, election officials could soon certify whether a proposed constitutional amendment guaranteeing abortion rights received enough petition signatures to qualify for the ballot in the reliably Republican state.

University of Missouri political scientist Peverill Squire said that if the measure is on the ballot, it could draw out enough Democratic voters to help swing a few competitive legislative races.

"They can seize on the personal freedom arguments the Republicans have generally owned over the recent elections," he said. □

Crew of Titan sub knew they were going to die before implosion, according to more than \$50M lawsuit

By **PATRICK WHITTLE and HOLLY RAMER**
Associated Press

The family of a French explorer who died in a submersible implosion has filed a more than \$50 million lawsuit, saying the crew experienced "terror and mental anguish" before the disaster and accusing the sub's operator of gross negligence.

Paul-Henri Nargeolet was among five people who died when the Titan submersible imploded during a voyage to the famed Titanic wreck site in the North Atlantic in June 2023. No one survived the trip aboard the experimental submersible owned by OceanGate, a company in Washington state that has since suspended operations. Known as "Mr. Titanic," Nargeolet participated in 37 dives to the Titanic site, the most of any diver in the world, according to the lawsuit. He was regarded as one of the world's most knowledgeable people about the famous wreck. Attorneys for his estate said in an emailed statement that the "doomed submersible" had a "troubled history," and that OceanGate failed to disclose key facts about the vessel and its durability. According to the lawsuit, the Titan "dropped weights" about 90 minutes into its dive, indicating the team had



Debris from the Titan submersible, recovered from the ocean floor near the wreck of the Titanic, is unloaded from the ship Horizon Arctic at the Canadian Coast Guard pier in St. John's, Newfoundland, June 28, 2023.

Associated Press

aborted or attempted to abort the dive.

"While the exact cause of failure may never be determined, experts agree that the Titan's crew would have realized exactly what was happening," the lawsuit states. "Common sense dictates that the crew were well aware they were going to die, before dying."

The lawsuit goes on to say: "The crew may well have heard the carbon fiber's crackling noise grow more intense as the weight of the water pressed on Titan's hull.

The crew lost communications and perhaps power as well. By experts' reckoning, they would have continued to descend, in full knowledge of the vessel's irreversible failures, experiencing terror and mental anguish prior to the Titan ultimately imploding." A spokesperson for OceanGate declined to comment on the lawsuit, which was filed Tuesday in King County, Washington. The defendants must respond to the complaint in the coming weeks, court papers state. The lawsuit describes Nargeolet as

an employee of OceanGate and a crew member on the Titan.

The suit also criticizes Titan's "hip, contemporary, wireless electronics system, and states that none of the controller, controls or gauges would work without a constant source of power and a wireless signal." Though OceanGate designated Nargeolet as a member of the crew, "many of the particulars about the vessel's flaws and shortcomings were not disclosed and were purposely concealed," the

attorneys, the Buzbee Law Firm of Houston, Texas, said in their statement.

Tony Buzbee, one of the attorneys on the case, said one of the suit's goals is to "get answers for the family as to exactly how this happened, who all were involved, and how those involved could allow this to happen." Concerns were raised in the aftermath of the disaster about whether the Titan was doomed due to its unconventional design and its creator's refusal to submit to independent checks that are standard in the industry. Its implosion also raised questions about the viability and future of private deep-sea exploration. The U.S. Coast Guard quickly convened a high-level investigation, which is ongoing.

A key public hearing that is part of the investigation is scheduled to take place in September.

The Titan made its last dive on June 18, 2023, a Sunday morning, and lost contact with its support vessel about two hours later. After a search and rescue mission that drew attention around the world, the wreckage of the Titan was found on the ocean floor about 984 feet (300 meters) off the bow of the Titanic, about 435 miles (700 kilometers) south of St. John's, Newfoundland. □

Vance jokes he's checking out his future VP plane while overlapping with Harris at Wisconsin airport

By **MEG KINNARD and BILL BARROW**
Associated Press
EAU CLAIRE, Wis. (AP) —



Republican vice presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance, R-Ohio, walks back from looking at Air Force Two at Chippewa Valley Regional Airport, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2024, in Eau Claire, Wis.
Associated Press

Republican vice presidential nominee JD Vance said he had a "bit of fun" Wednesday trying to catch

up with Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris on an airport tarmac the two shared as part of dueling campaign travels. "I just wanted to check out my future plane," he joked with reporters after walking off former President Donald Trump's campaign plane and walking straight over to Air Force Two, which had landed with the vice president and her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz. "I also wanted to go say hello to the vice president and ask her why she refuse to answer questions from the media," Vance

said, jabbing at Harris for not having conducted an extended interview or full press conference since she began her campaign July 21 after President Joe Biden ended his reelection bid. "I at least have enough respect for you all and for the American people to come and talk to you and answer questions." Vance, a U.S. senator from Ohio, said he was not able to speak to Harris. It's not unheard of during a general election campaign for opposing candidates to cross paths as they travel, especially given the compressed

map that limits much of the campaign activity to a relative few states that will determine the Electoral College winner. "I had a little bit of fun," Vance said. "I don't think the vice president waved at me as she drove away."

The senator campaigned in Wisconsin on Wednesday as a counter to Harris and Walz, who are continuing a multiday tour of battleground states that began Tuesday in Philadelphia with the first joint rally after the vice president announced Walz as her running mate. □

U.K. police prepare for more unrest amid fears that anti-immigration groups have a list of targets

By **DANICA KIRKA** and **BRIAN MELLEY**
Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British police prepared Wednesday for another night of violence amid concerns that anti-immigration groups planned to target dozens of locations throughout the country following a week of rioting and disorder fueled by misinformation over a stabbing attack against young girls.

Police anticipated more than 100 events, Britain's Press Association reported, citing a law enforcement source. Internet chat groups shared a list of agencies and law firms specializing in immigration as possible targets.

But in parts of London, Bristol, Oxford and Birmingham, peaceful crowds of anti-racism protesters gathered in such large numbers that they either vastly outnumbered anti-immigrant agitators or there was no protest to counter. The head of London's Metropolitan Police Service



Windows are boarded up ahead of an anti-immigration protest in Northampton, England, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2024.

said officers were focused on protecting immigration lawyers and services. In addition to thousands of officers already deployed, about 1,300 specialist forces were on standby in case of serious trouble in London. "We'll protect those people,"

Commissioner Mark Rowley said. "It is completely unacceptable, regardless of your political views, to intimidate any sector of lawful activity, and we will not let the immigration asylum system be intimidated."

Cities and towns have been wracked by riots and looting for the past week as angry mobs, encouraged by far-right extremists, clashed with police and counter-demonstrators. The disturbances began after misinformation spread

Associated Press

about the stabbing rampage that killed three girls in the seaside community of Southport, with social media users falsely identifying the suspect as an immigrant and a Muslim.

Rioters spouting anti-immigrant slogans have attacked mosques and hotels housing asylum-seekers, creating fear in Muslim and immigrant communities. In recent days, reports have emerged of violent counterattacks in some areas. By early evening Wednesday, though, trouble had not erupted.

A couple hundred supporters of immigrants who showed up outside a law office on a residential street in the London neighborhood of North Finchley found themselves largely alone with several dozen police officers.

The crowd chanted "refugees welcome" and "London against racism." Some held signs saying "Stop the far right," "Migration is not a crime" and "Finchley against Fascism." □

U.N. health agency convening experts meeting to decide if mpox outbreak in Africa is global emergency

GENEVA (AP) — The head of the World Health Organization said Wednesday he will convene an expert group to determine if the increasing spread of the mpox virus in Africa warrants being declared a global emergency.

At a press briefing in Geneva, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that given the increasing spread of mpox cases beyond Congo, he has decided to ask independent experts to advise WHO "as soon as possible." Last week, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that mpox, also known as monkeypox, has now been detected in 10 African countries this year including Congo, which has more than 96% of all cases and deaths. Compared with

the same time period last year, the agency said cases are up 160% and deaths have jumped by 19%.

Officials at the Africa CDC said nearly 70% of cases in Congo are in children younger than 15, who also accounted for 85% of deaths.

Mpox was reported last week in Burundi and Rwanda for the first time while other countries including Kenya and the Central African Republic also identified cases.

WHO's Tedros said the agency has released \$1 million from its emergency fund to support the response to mpox, also known as monkeypox.

Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of the deadlier version of mpox, which can kill up to 10% of people, in

a Congolese mining town that they feared might spread more easily among people. Mpox spreads via close contact with infected people, including via sex.

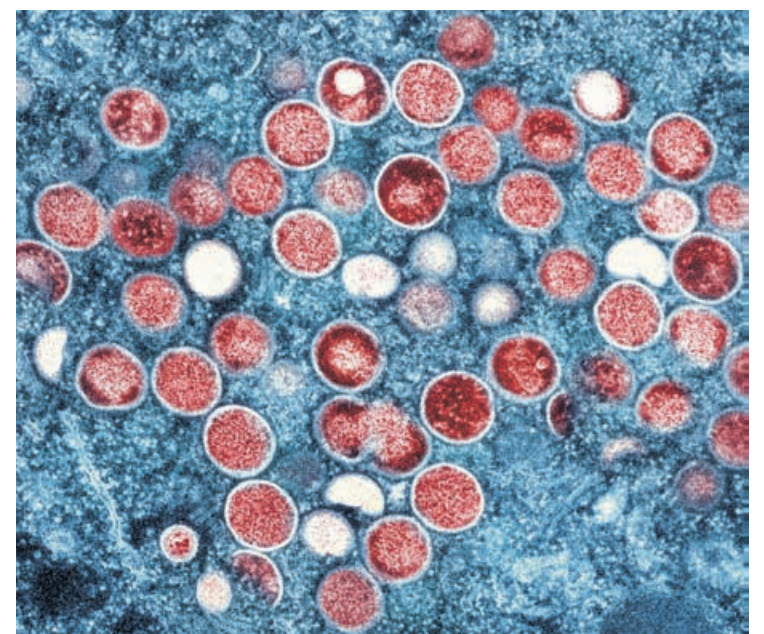
In 2022, WHO declared mpox to be a global emergency after it spread to more than 70 countries, mostly affecting gay and bisexual men. Before that outbreak, the disease had mostly been seen in sporadic epidemics in central and West Africa when people came into contact with infected animals.

Western countries mostly shut down the spread of mpox with the help of vaccines and treatments, but very few of those have been available in Africa.

Maria Van Kerkhove, who leads WHO's outbreak department, said there were numerous concern-

ing issues in Africa's mpox epidemic and called for a

more urgent response. □



This image provided by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases shows a colorized transmission electron micrograph of monkeypox particles (red) found within an infected cell (blue), cultured in the laboratory that was captured and color-enhanced at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility in Fort Detrick, Md.

Associated Press

Yemen official says 30 people have been killed and hundreds displaced in flooding

By AHMED AL-HAJ

Associated Press

SANAA, YEMEN (AP) — A Yemeni official said Wednesday that 30 people have been killed and hundreds displaced in flooding in the southern city of Hodeidah following several days of heavy rains.

Hodeidah Gov. Mugammad Qahim told Houthi rebel-controlled Masirah TV that the floods displaced people from 500 homes. Five people were missing, he said.

Hodeidah, the southwestern city of Taiz, and the northwestern city of Hajjah were all hit hard by floods this week during Yemen's ongoing seasonal rainfall that caused flooding that swept away poorly built homes. Authorities have not announced a confirmed overall death toll, or given the overall number of people injured or missing.

Yemen's rainy season begins in late March, and rains intensify in July through mid-August. The U.N.'s humanitarian office in Yemen said Wednesday afternoon that Friday floods in the Maqbnah district in Taiz city killed 15 people, cleared agricultural lands and damaged homes and infrastructure.



This image made from a video provided by the Ansar Allah Media Office, shows the southern city of Hodeidah, Yemen, where 30 people have been killed and hundreds displaced by flooding, on Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2024.

Associated Press

Further severe weather was expected to hit the western port city of Hodeidah later on Wednesday.

Some residents have reportedly been stranded inside their homes in al-Mansuriyah district since Tuesday night as roadways have been blocked.

Local authorities still haven't reached areas severely affected by the floods for two days, leaving some residents trapped inside their

homes, according to witnesses who spoke with The Associated Press.

Mahdi al-Mashat, chairman of the Supreme Political Council, ordered local authorities to respond to damaged areas, according to Masirah TV, which reported that floods caused "major damages to properties, lands, and roads" in Hodeidah.

Witnesses described the scene in the Yemeni Ti-

hamah coastal plain as horrifying. Mohamed Rassam said some livestock were found dead after drowning in the mud due to the floods. Food supplies and drinkable water were also lost.

"The floods swept away everything," he said.

Some residents were stranded inside their homes in Tihamah, a region that is part of Hodeidah. Others were able to leave and headed

to Hodeidah city. Many of the houses in Tihamah, where malnutrition has been reported, are made of brick and materials that can be easily ruined by rain. "We have been left stranded under the rain after severe winds damaged our home, which is a hut where me and my seven children lived. Authorities never provided any assistance," said Ahmed Ayeshe.

Meanwhile, Khaled Meswat said that people in the community only hear about humanitarian assistance and emergency services, but never actually receive any. He said at least three people were swept away by the floods, while elderly people died of hunger and cold.

"I can say that hundreds of houses built from straw in Tihamah have been swept away by the floods over the past 24 hours," said Farree Hamdan. He added that cattle and livestock in those areas were also swept away.

The United Nations Population Fund-Yemen said this week on the social media platform X that the floods impacted more than 28,000 people living in four districts in Hajjah city. □

Turkey formally asks to join the genocide case against Israel at the UN court

By SUZAN FRASER

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkey on Wednesday filed a request with a U.N. court to join South Africa's lawsuit

accusing Israel of genocide in Gaza, the foreign minister said. Turkey's ambassador to the Netherlands, accompanied by a group of Turkish legislators,

submitted a declaration of intervention to the International Court of Justice in The Hague. With the development, Turkey, one of the fiercest critics of Israel's actions in Gaza, becomes the latest nation seeking to participate in the case. Spain, Mexico, Colombia, Nicaragua and Libya have also asked to join the case, as have Palestinian officials. The court's decision on their requests is still pending.

"We have just submitted our application to the International Court of Justice to intervene in the genocide case filed against Israel," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan wrote on the social media platform X.

"Emboldened by the impunity for its crimes, Israel is killing more and more innocent Palestinians every day."

"The international community must do its part to stop the genocide; it must put the necessary pressure on Israel and its supporters," he said.

"Turkey will make every effort to do so." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has accused Israel of genocide, called for it to be punished in international courts and criticized Western nations for backing Israel.

In May, Turkey suspended trade with Israel, citing its assault on Gaza. In contrast

to Western nations that have designated Hamas a terrorist organization, Erdogan has commended the group, calling it a liberation movement.

South Africa brought a case to the International Court of Justice late last year, accusing Israel of violating the genocide convention through its military operations in Gaza. Israel has strongly rejected accusations of genocide and has argued that the war in Gaza is a legitimate defensive action against Hamas militants for their Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel that killed around 1,200 people and in which 250 hostages were taken. □



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan speaks during a news conference in Ankara, Turkey, Monday, May 13, 2024.

Associated Press

Visit the island's hidden natural pools

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently visited, there are an additional two “hidden” natural pools that are situated in the northern coast of the island, two ideal stops in your tour itinerary.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto

and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle’s Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4x4 vehicle or by foot if you’re up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you’ve completed that, you are set!

If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is lo-



cated on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It's also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!

Cave Pool

This relatively new pool appeared just a few years ago, when a part of the dried up coral floor broke off and created a partition between the ocean and what is now the natural pool that is hidden there. Because it's still so new, there is no official name for it, but most people just call it the cave pool.

Just like the Conchi, the new natural pool is situated on the northern coast of Aruba. However, this pool is much easier to reach with any type of vehicle, and there is no hiking needed.

This spot has also become a regular stop for touring visitors.

When you get there, maybe you won't be able to spot the pool immediately, because you will probably notice the moon-shaped lagoon where wild northern waves crash into each other. Sounds scary, but if you look down on your right, you'll see a calm, crystal blue little pool in the corner. To get there, you have to climb down some stairs. Be careful when climbing down and follow the instructions of your tour guide if you have one.

And just like Conchi, this pool also has a jumping spot, and a rope to climb back up the boulder. □

Picture of cave pool is credited to RockaBeach Tours



Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!

(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the “Candelchi” (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Department of Agriculture,

Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, *Holocentrus adscensionis*: Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this

picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*. Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called “bari di clabo” (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to



8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they

can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □



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Don't miss out on L'Avenue's Early Bird Special!



(Oranjestad)—Up to grab an early dinner after a day of shopping or cruising? Take advantage of L'Avenue's Early Bird Special, and experience their innovative twist of traditional Belgian cuisine!

Located in a cozy nook at The Cove Mall—a short walking distance from the Holiday Inn and Paseo Herencia, this Belgian and French bistro offers a delicious and rich menu available through lunch and dinner from 11am to

10pm. Enjoy your lunch and/or dinner in a cool, air-conditioned interior area of the restaurant, accompanied by the warm lights and chic design that emphasizes the restaurant's laid-back, yet sophisticated ambience.

Lunch includes a variety of sandwiches—with a healthy selection of bread options—if you're going for a light meal, but just like their dinner selection, also includes steak, chicken, fish, and even mussels and rabbit if you're craving a bit more of L'Avenue's exquisite menu. And let's not forget their wide selection of Belgian beer and European wine to complete the tasty experience!

But that's not all! L'Avenue is offering their guests their Early Bird Special, available every day from 4pm to 7pm. Enjoy this affordable and



delectable 3-course meal special at a comfortable price of \$29.50 per guest, which includes a selection of their fine in-house wine.

L'Avenue honors and takes pride in serving the traditional Belgian and French flavors, but does not shy away from offering a flexible menu for their guests' needs. That's right, L'Avenue also offers to cater for their guests' dietary restrictions, making sure that each guest gets well taken care of!

More information
L'Avenue is situated at The Cove Mall in Palm Beach and is open every day from 11am to 10pm for lunch and dinner. To book a reserva-

tion or ask for more information, please contact their phone line at +297 6996400, send an e-mail info@lavenuearuba.com, or visit their website at lavenuearuba.com □



Adriaan Laclé One of Aruba's richest men in the twentieth century



(Oranjestad)—The name Adriaan Laclé may ring a bell to locals as one of the bigger roads on the island, but about a century ago, Adriaan Laclé was a rich businessman, well-known for his generosity, wealth, and taste.

Adriaan was born in 1866 and was the eldest of six children. Not much is known about his childhood upbringing or any of his earlier business ordeals, but during his hay day he often

helped people get loans, was a well-established trader, and owned several plots of land. In fact, he commissioned the construction of the famous La Quinta Carmen manor—now a restaurant. Though he himself never lived in the beautiful manor, his own house also reflected his success and good taste. Today his house still stands in good condition and can be found in the back streets of main street Oranjestad. Regarding his personal life,

it has been said that he was married twice during his lifetime. He had his first daughter during his first marriage but lost his wife soon after her birth. During his second marriage, he fathered 16 children. However, it has been said that only 11 of those 17 made it past 18 years of age. Perhaps two of his most well-known daughters are Maria Monica Laclé and Maria Veneranda Laclé, who went on to marry successful brothers Eloy Arends

and Maximilian Arends, respectively. Their houses are still standing; Eloy and Maria Monica's mansion functions as a townhall, used to host civil marriages, while Maximilian and Maria Veneranda's house stands on the opposite side of the road to them—though currently under renovation after years left in ruin. □

Source: De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over de geschiedenis van Aruba) by Evert Bongers.

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Last but not least: check out our



website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again.

For today we received a lovely message from Carol & Terry Wood from Vestal, New York, USA.

They wrote to us saying: "Aruba to

us is where it all started. We spent our Honeymoon there in October of 1984 at the Divi Divi. We are coming back for our 40th Anniversary."

Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! ☐

Dining in? Try making a local favorite How to make "funchi hasa"

(Oranjestad)—A night in can be just as fun as a night out on the town, especially if you got the right snacks to munch on. One of the most famous Aruban snacks or appetizers is "funchi hasa" (fried polenta sticks). A super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here's how to make it!

Before we start, get to know the basics

So what is funchi hasa? Funchi, or Aruban polenta, is a popular side dish for local dishes, like soups, stews and fried fish. Made from a corn flour, water and butter mixture, this appetizer is traditionally eaten alongside a warm meal. However, locals also like to fry sticks of funchi for a quick and filling snack.

Ingredients (measured by heart)

1. Polenta flour*
2. Water
3. Butter
4. Salt to taste

Directions

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized sauce pan. Add in some salt and butter to taste in the boiling water and let this dissolve and melt. Then, gradually add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start to begin to harden pretty fast, so be careful not to add too much. At this phase of cooking, you want a goopy thick mixture, but thin enough so you can continue to stir to get all the lumps out.

After reaching a semi-firm,

yet flexible texture, grab a baking pan or any large, deep plate, and pour the mixture in. Be sure that this plate is wet or greased so that the mixture does not stick to the bottom. Let this cool completely while it firms up for the last time. Once it's cooled you can enjoy it as is, topped with some butter or shredded cheese. Or, you can take it to another level of deliciousness.

When your funchi is firm enough, cut it into strips (size is up to you). Heat up some oil in a pan and fry those babies up! After frying, you can top it with some cheese or enjoy it with your favorite dipping sauce.

Note: We recommend the FUNCHI FRESKU polenta flour brand that is sold in all supermarkets on the island. You can also use yellow corn flour from the brand PAN.

Photo credit of fried funchi sticks: Jacqueline Felida on Pinterest. ☐



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National Park Arikok: Aruba's biggest nature conservation



The National Park Arikok comprises almost 18 % of the island. Its rugged terrain, desert-like hills filled with tall cacti, breathtaking coastline and protected local flora and fauna welcome you to be explored. There are numerous animals to discover, for example the sea turtle who lays his eggs on the park's beaches.

The national park Arikok takes you on a memorable journey of the islands past offering unique geological, cultural and historical sites. These can all be enjoyed and explored either on your own or during guided tours. A wide variety of educational and informative programs and fun activities is available.

Did you know that four of the in total seven species of sea turtle lay their eggs on Aruba's beaches? In the national park, a Least Tern (*Sterna antillarum*) keeps a strict eye on a very special event taking place below on the beach: a majestic Leatherback (*Dermochelys coriacea*) heads back to sea after laying her eggs, while another nest laid 2 months ago by the same female hatches—a very rare occurrence of daytime nesting and hatching. Sea turtles prefer nesting in the cool and dark hours of the night. And hatchlings usually wait for the cue of cooling surface sand before emerging.

Nature Conservation

The protected area of National Park Arikok was officially established in 2000.

Arikok National Park is a 34 square kilometers (7907 acres) of natural area, located at the north-eastern part of Aruba which contains examples of most of the island's flora and fauna against a backdrop of great geological complexity. We are proud to state that approximately 18% of the total land area of Aruba is assigned as a National Park, to protect and preserve the flora, fauna, geology and historical remains present within Arikok National Park.

The Landscape

There is a great geological variety within the park. The main aspects are the rough hills of the volcanic Aruba lava formation, the mysterious rocks of the batholithic quartz-diorite/tonalite, and the limestone rocks from fossilized coral. The two tallest hills on the island are situated within the park. Jamanota hill 188 meters (617 ft) and Arikok hill 176 meters (577 ft), from which the name of the park is derived.

The line of the permanently wind-and-wave beaten North Coast is broken by several bays (boca's). Most of them are small yet impressive inlets at the mouth of dry riverbeds. Some of these bays (boca's) are spectacular sights, adorned with white, sandy beaches and sand dunes, as is the case at Boca Prins and Dos Playa.

Arikok is also home to Conchi, Aruba's most important natural attraction; also known as The Natural Pool. The journey to the Pool is

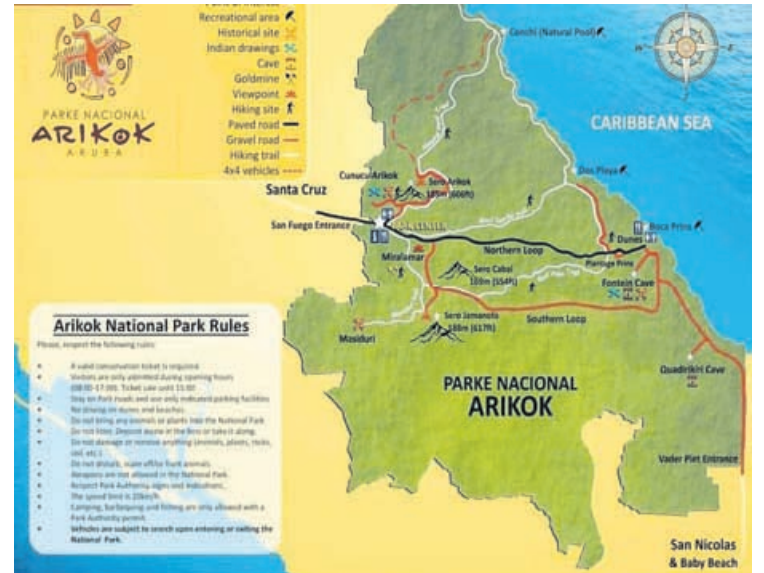
able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Cultural and Historical components

There are a number of sites within the park that attest to the history of Aruba. The Caquetio Indians left rock paintings in Cunucu Arikok and Fontein Cave. The bird drawing in the park logo is a copy of one of these historical artistic expressions.

Old plantation (Cunucus) sites tell the story of an active yet challenging agricultural past.

These Cunucus were also residential areas for the few families that worked the land. These families found ways to survive in the difficult conditions, and were



able to erect their homes with materials found in the area. Two of these adobe houses have been restored. Park rangers are learning many of the old building techniques in order to preserve this unique Aruban mud-house. At Cunucu Arikok and near Plantation Prins you can find these adobe houses.

Park Management

For the management of the park, a dedicated foundation "Fundacion Parke Nacional Arikok" (FPNA), known today as the Aruba National Park Foundation was established in July 2003. In February 2017, mangrove and wetland RAMSAR site #198 Spanish Lagoon was annexed to Arikok National Park due to its importance as a feeding and breeding area for water birds and as

a nursery area for a variety of marine organisms. With this addition, the areas under FPNA management increased by 70 hectares while the amount of species of flora and fauna to be conserved to over 250. On December 21st, 2018 (AB 2018 no. 77) Parke Marino Aruba – currently consisting of four marine protected areas (MPAs) – was officially established and subsequently brought under management of FPNA. In 2019 management plans will be established for the new MPAs which include: coral reefs, sea grass beds, mangrove systems, a large diversity of breeding seabirds. Parke Marino Aruba also contains potential shark nursery areas, endangered sea turtle nesting beaches and marine mammal nursery areas. □



In celebrating 200 years of Oranjestad... Learn about the history of the famous town hall!

(Oranjestad)—If you've ever taken a stroll through main street Oranjestad, you may have stumbled upon a big green house with beautiful colonial design. This legendary house, now used as a town hall for civil marriages, was once owned by a wealthy doctor and formed part of the elite neighborhood in Oranjestad.



Jacobo Eloy Arends was an Aruban physician, and in lived in Oranjestad during the 1920s. In 1922, he married Maria Monica Lacle, the daughter of well-known business man at the time, Adriaan Lacle. The two lived a posh life in the city center, and their mansion—once the center for neighborhood parties—now serves as a public town hall for civil marriages and is a cultural monument on the island.

The house was designed by architect Chibi Wever, and constructed under the

leadership of famous master carpenter, Dada Picus, who was famous at the time for his construction of beautiful buildings.

The construction of the house started once Jacobo and Maria got engaged. It is said that during the time of construction, Maria was not allowed to see the building nor be anywhere near the construction site. It wasn't until after her honeymoon that she saw the completed mansion for the first time, furnished entirely by her sisters-in-law.

The mansion also contained the doctor's office, as well as a pharmacy. After the death of Jacobo, the house was inherited by his son, an Aruban dentist, who converted Jacobo's office into his own dental practice. Over the years, the house was rented and used by third parties, but eventually fell into disrepair, as the maintenance cost became too high to cover.

The land was sold to Land Aruba in 1986, but it did not see a renovation until 1997. Nowadays, it serves to host weddings, and is attached to a modern building situated behind—the Aruban census office.

Jacobo and Maria's mansion was situated in front of another famous mansion, owned by Jacobo's brother Frederico Maximiliaan (Machi) Arends. Frederico was married to Veneranda (whom the mansion was named after). Their house was also



constructed by Dada Picus, utilizing Veneranda's design vision that was inspired by a house she saw in Cartagena, Colombia.

Nowadays, this mansion lies in ruins. However, the Aruban government recently announced its official res-

toration, with plans to convert this monument into a governmental office and public space for visitors of Oranjestad.

Source and pictures credited to: "De Kolibrie op de Rots (en meer over the geschiedenis van Aruba)" by Evert Bongers. □



Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back or still enjoying your vacation?... we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation.

Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. □



CROSSWORD

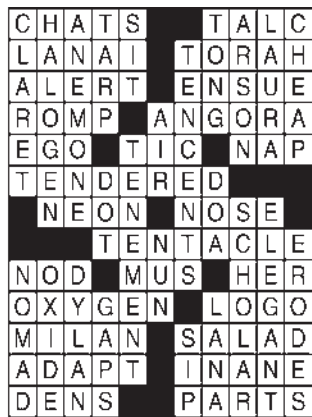
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

- 1 Praline morsel
- 6 Diminished
- 11 Florida city
- 12 Ecuador's capital
- 13 Barn areas
- 14 City-based
- 15 Bothers
- 17 Tire track
- 19 Cobbler's tool
- 20 Scouting org.
- 23 Relaxed
- 25 Persia, today
- 26 Casual eatery
- 28 Goopy cheese
- 29 Bank fixtures
- 30 Pig-poke link
- 31 Fly catcher
- 32 Put down
- 33 Keep from practicing
- 35 Summer fruit
- 38 Skip the ceremony
- 41 Blow away
- 42 Perch
- 43 Prom rentals
- 44 Big trucks

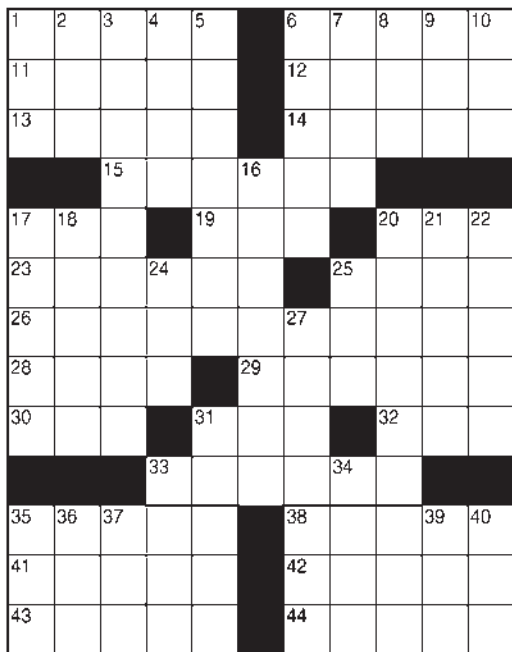
DOWN

- 1 Campaign pro
- 2 Green prefix
- 3 Casual eatery
- 4 Utah ski resort
- 5 Tennis star Ilie
- 6 Match in value
- 7 Lancaster of film
- 8 Feeding time need
- 9 Greek vowel
- 10 Dress in
- 16 Turns abruptly
- 17 Bar mitzvah figure



Yesterday's answer

- 18 Road reversal
- 20 Casual eatery
- 21 Dancer's boss
- 22 Nervous
- 24 Candle count
- 25 Debtor's letters
- 27 Yaks
- 31 Cellar stock
- 33 Take a nap
- 34 Balm ingredient
- 35 Yoga need
- 36 Running bird
- 37 Indulgent
- 39 Greek consonant
- 40 UFO pilots



5-16

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

5-16

CRYPTOQUOTE

UNBKB RM X MRSVCB CRVNU DT
MWRBSWB, XSG UD FKRNUBS
RU XSZQNBKB RM UD FKRNUBS
RU B PBKZQNBKB. — RMXXW
XMREDP

Yesterday's Cryptoquote: NATURE RESERVES SOME OF HER CHOICE REWARDS FOR DAYS WHEN HER MOOD MAY APPEAR TO BE SOMBER. — RACHEL CARSON

Cruise ship Schedule: August 6 - 27 2024

			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
TUE	06	ADVENTURE OF THE SEAS CARNIVAL HORIZON CARNIVAL MARDI GRAS	08.00 09.00 13.00	20.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
WED	07	RHAPSODY OF THE SEAS	09.00	21.00	C	1
TUE	13	CELEBRITY BEYOND CARNIVAL CELEBRATION CARNIVAL VISTA	08.00 08.00 13.00	21.00 22.00 23.00	B C I	1 1 1
THU	14	ENCHANTED PRINCESS	08.00	18.00	C	1
WED	20	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	22.00	C	1
WED	27	CELEBRITY BEYOND	08.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basicbut important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

lets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Electrical power



Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of out-

Drinking water



The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.

Supermarket hours



Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety



Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occurs, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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Great Barrier Reef waters were hottest in 400 years over the past decade, study finds

By **SUMAN NAISHADHAM**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) —

Ocean temperatures in the Great Barrier Reef hit their highest level in 400 years over the past decade, according to researchers who warned that the reef likely won't survive if planetary warming isn't stopped. During that time, between 2016 and 2024, the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef ecosystem and one of the most biodiverse, suffered mass coral bleaching events. That's when water temperatures get too hot and coral expel the algae that provide them with color and food, and sometimes die. Earlier this year, aerial surveys of over 300 reefs in the system off Australia's northeast coast found bleaching in shallow water areas spanning two-thirds of the reef, according to Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority.

Researchers from Melbourne University and other universities in Australia, in a paper published Wednesday in the journal Nature, were able to compare recent ocean temperatures to historical ones by using coral skeleton samples from the Coral Sea to reconstruct sea surface temperature data from 1618 to 1995. They coupled that with sea surface temperature data from 1900 to 2024. They observed largely stable temperatures before 1900, and steady warming from January to March from 1960 to 2024. And during five years of coral bleaching in the past decade during 2016, 2017, 2020, 2022 and 2024 temperatures in January and March were significantly higher than anything dating back to 1618, researchers found. They used climate models to attribute the warming rate after 1900 to human-caused climate change. The only other year nearly as warm as the mass bleaching years of the past decade was 2004.

"The reef is in danger and



The Remoora pontoon, owned by Reef Magic, sits above a section of the Great Barrier Reef above Moore Reef in Gunggandji Sea Country off coast of Queensland in eastern Australia on Nov. 14, 2022.

Associated Press

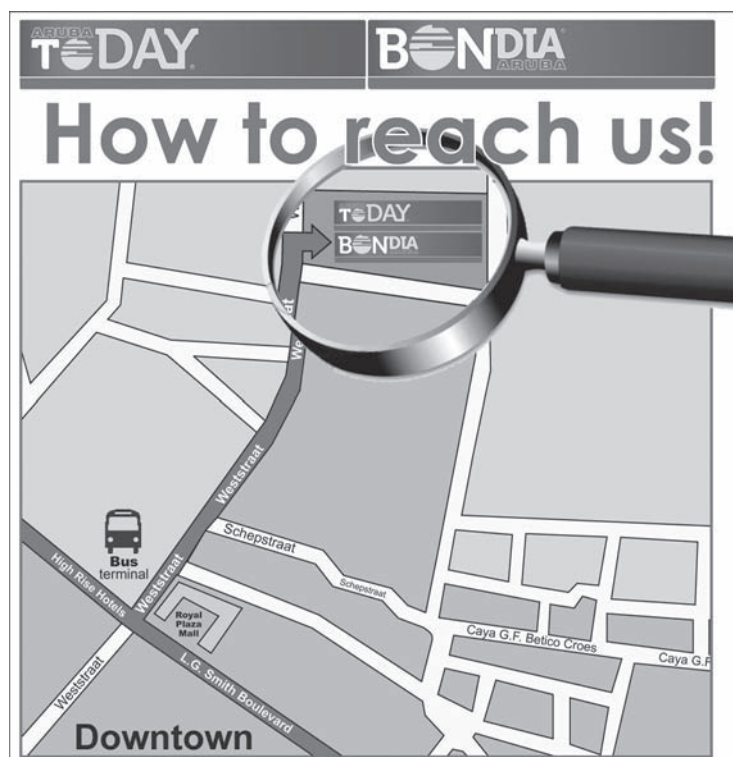
if we don't divert from our current course, our generation will likely witness the demise of one of those great natural wonders," said Benjamin Henley, the study's lead author and a lecturer of sustainable urban management at the University of Melbourne. "If you put all of the evidence together ... heat extremes are occurring too often for those corals to effectively adapt and evolve."

Across the world, reefs are key to seafood production and tourism. Scientists have long said additional loss of coral is likely to be a casualty of future warming as the world approaches the 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 de-

grees Fahrenheit) threshold that countries agreed to try and keep warming under in the 2015 Paris climate agreement.

Even if global warming is kept under the Paris Agreement's goal, which scientists say Earth is almost guaranteed to cross, 70% to 90% of corals across the globe could be threatened, the study's authors said. As a result, future coral reefs would likely have less diversity in coral species which has already been happening as the oceans have grown hotter. Coral reefs have been evolving over the past quarter century in response to bleaching events like

the ones the study's authors highlighted, said Michael McPhaden, a senior climate scientist at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration who was not involved with the study. □



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Editor

Caribbean Speed Printers N.V.
Aruba Bank N.V. Acc. #332668
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Editors

Pilar Flores
Richard Brooks
Angenette Figueroe

Sales

Mark Gomes
Sulaika Croes

Classifieds

classified@cspnv.com

Distribution and Collection

accounting@bondia.com

Social / Website

Juan Luis Pinto

Weststraat 22
T: 582-7800

E: news@arubatoday.com

W: www.arubatoday.com

f @arubatoday

Farmers honor 'Peanuts' creator Charles M. Schulz with corn mazes across U.S. and in Canada

By **MARK KENNEDY**

AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Visitors to corn mazes across the country are finding a familiar and joyous figure in the winding labyrinth of tall stalks. Snoopy.

More than 80 farms in the U.S. and Canada have teamed up with Peanuts Worldwide to create "Peanuts"-themed mazes to celebrate the beloved strip's 75th birthday this summer and fall.

A massive Snoopy rests on top of his doghouse in a maze at Dull's Tree Farm in Thorntown, Indiana, and he's depicted gleefully atop a pumpkin at Downey's Farm in Caledon, Ontario.

"All of these events helps keep my dad's legacy alive," says Jill Schulz, an actor and daughter of "Peanuts" creator Charles M. Schulz.

"As someone who can't even keep houseplants alive, the fact that they can do that with a corn maze and get the artwork right and create a fun experience for all ages is pretty incredible," she adds, laughing.



This July 17, 2024 image released by Gull Meadow Farms shows a corn maze honoring the 75th anniversary of the Peanuts comic strip in Richland, Mich.

Associated Press

The mazes which span 35 states and provinces, from California to New York, Ontario to Texas are expected to attract more than 2 million visitors. Farmers are signing up for the free service because the mazes are part of the customer lure, in addition to things like hay rides, fresh produce and pumpkin carvings.

Each maze is designed for the size of the farm from

1.5 acres to 20 acres and are mostly corn but also sunflowers. They're custom created by the world's largest corn maze consulting company, The MAIZE Inc.

The Utah-based Brett Herbst, who leads the company and who launched his first corn maze in 1996, says technology has only somewhat changed the way corn mazes are made.

"The first year we did it, we just used a weed whacker with a saw blade on it when the corn was fully grown," he says. "Now we do it when it's short and we go in and either mow it or rototill it. We design it all on a computer, but most of it we actually just go draw it out on the ground by hand." He and his team have over the years designed mazes with everything from the

faces of presidential candidates, Oprah Winfrey, zombies, John Wayne and Chris LeDoux. Charlie Brown and Co. just work well, he says.

"It's very nostalgic and just seemed like a very natural fit from the get-go to embrace that with 'Peanuts,'" he says. "It's harvest time. It's kind of become this iconic thing."

There's an art and a science to maze building, a balance between maintaining the integrity of the image, but also making it a true maze where people can actually get lost in. "That's definitely a challenge there," says Herbst.

"You want to accomplish both as much as possible."

"Peanuts" made its debut Oct. 2, 1950. The travails of the "little round-headed kid" Charlie Brown and his pals eventually ran in more than 2,600 newspapers, reaching millions of readers in 75 countries.

The strip offers enduring images of kites in trees, Charlie Brown trying to kick a football, tart-tongued Lucy handing out advice for a nickel and Snoopy taking the occasional flight of fancy to the skies. □

Bob Woodward's next book, 'War,' will focus on conflict abroad and politics at home



This cover image released by Simon & Schuster shows "War" by Bob Woodward.

Associated Press

By **HILLEL ITALIE**

AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Bob Woodward's next book,

continuing a long tradition of election year releases, will focus on the conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East and how they shape American presidential politics. Simon & Schuster announced Wednesday that Woodward's "War" will be published Oct. 15. The publisher is calling the book an "intimate and sweeping account of one of the most tumultuous and dangerous periods in presidential politics and American history," centered on President Joe Biden, Vice President Kamala Harris and former President Donald Trump, who is Harris' opponent in this fall's election.

"Readers are with President Biden and his top advisers in tense conversations with

Russian president Vladimir Putin, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. Readers also see Trump, conducting a shadow presidency and seeking to regain political power," the announcement reads in part.

"With his detailed, inside-the-room reporting, Woodward shows President Biden's approach to managing the war in Ukraine, the most significant land war in Europe since World War II, and his tortured path to contain the bloody Middle East conflict between Israel and the terrorist group Hamas."

According to Simon & Schuster, "War" also "provides an unvarnished ex-

amination of the vice president as she tries to embrace the Biden legacy and policies while beginning to chart a path of her own as a presidential candidate."

Biden announced just 2 1/2 weeks ago that he would not seek re-election, leaving Woodward relatively little time to update his book. He has turned in a completed manuscript, but continues to report and may still revise "War" before it goes to the printers.

"We have the capacity to react quickly if there's a new development," a spokesperson for the publisher said.

Woodward, 81, first became known for his Washington Post reporting on the

1970s Watergate scandal that helped lead to President Richard Nixon's resignation. He has since written more than 20 books, most of which have been topped The New York Times' nonfiction bestseller list, and has a long history of publishing topical works ahead of national elections. His notable releases include "Plan of Attack," released in 2004 as President George W. Bush sought re-election, and in 2020, "Peril," about Trump. Financial terms were not disclosed.

Woodward was represented by Robert Barnett, the Washington attorney whose clients have included Bush, former President Bill Clinton and former President Barack Obama. □

Rafael Nadal withdraws from the U.S. Open, the 3rd Grand Slam tournament he'll miss this year

By **HOWARD FENDRICH**
AP Tennis Writer

Rafael Nadal pulled out of the U.S. Open on Wednesday, making it the third Grand Slam tournament he's missed this season and raising more questions about his future in tennis at age 38.

Nadal wrote on social media that he will miss "those electric and special night sessions" in Arthur Ashe Stadium, "but I don't think I would be able to give my 100% this time."

He added that his next event will be the Laver Cup in Berlin on Sept. 20-22. Nadal teamed with Roger Federer in a doubles match at that event in 2022, when Federer played for the final time before his retirement.

Nadal's announcement was not much of a surprise. Yes, he was on the official entry list released last month for New York, but that was more of a formality than anything and did not preclude the 22-time major champion from withdrawing at any point before competition begins Aug. 26.

Plus, Nadal telegraphed this news a week ago after



Spain's Rafael Nadal leaves the court after losing to Serbia's Novak Djokovic in their men's singles second round match at the Roland Garros stadium at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Monday, July 29, 2024, in Paris, France.

Associated Press

his participation in the 2024 Olympics for Spain ended with a quarterfinal loss in doubles alongside Carlos Alcaraz. That followed a second-round loss in singles to rival Novak Djokovic, who left Paris with the men's gold medal.

When he was asked then about playing at the U.S. Open, Nadal paused for a

while before responding. "Looks like not. But I'm going to let you know soon," he said. "For me, now, I can't give you a clear answer. I need some time, but for me, (it) looks difficult." Nadal has not announced anything about a possible retirement, but given his age and a recent history of injuries including hip sur-

gery in 2023 and abdominal muscle issues in 2024 that limited his number of matches the past two seasons it seems safe to say he probably does not have much left in him.

He is a four-time champion at the U.S. Open, taking the titles in 2010, 2013, 2017 and 2019. But the absence this time means he will have sat

out the hard-court tournament in four of the past five years; the exception was 2022, when he lost in the fourth round to Frances Tiafoe.

In 2023, Nadal hurt his hip during the Australian Open in January and was forced to skip the French Open, Wimbledon and the U.S. Open. This year, he hurt a muscle near the hip during a tuneup event before the Australian Open, so he sat that out. He then played at the French Open in May, but lost in the first round to eventual runner-up Alexander Zverev. Nadal opted to skip Wimbledon last month so he wouldn't have to manage the transition from the clay at Roland Garros to the grass at the All England Club, before returning to clay for the Olympics.

Nadal owns a record 14 titles from the French Open, and two apiece from Wimbledon and the Australian Open. His most recent two Slam trophies arrived in 2022, at Melbourne in January and at Paris in June, pushing him ahead of Federer for the then-record of 20 Grand Slam titles for a man. □

A'ja Wilson and Jackie Young help U.S. rout Nigeria 88-74 to reach Olympic women's hoops semifinals

By **DOUG FEINBERG**
AP Basketball Writer

PARIS (AP) — A'ja Wilson scored 20 points and Jackie Young added 15 points to help the U.S. beat Nigeria 88-74 on Wednesday night in the quarterfinals of the Paris Games, extending its record winning streak to 59 consecutive Olympic wins.

Breanna Stewart also had 13 for the Americans, who haven't lost since the 1992 Barcelona Games and are now two victories away from an unprecedented eighth consecutive gold medal. They will face a familiar foe in Australia in the semifinals on Friday night. The Opals routed Serbia 85-67. The other medal round game will feature host

France playing Belgium. The loss ended a historic run by Nigeria, which became the first African country to qualify for the Olympic basketball quarterfinals. After getting off to slow starts the last few games, the U.S. altered its starting lineup inserting Young for Diana Taurasi. It was the first time Taurasi didn't start since her first Olympics in 2004.

The move worked as the Americans were up 26-17 after the first quarter the first time they had a lead after one quarter since the opening win over Japan. Young had five points early before tweaking her ankle when she landed on a Nigerian player's foot while shooting a jumper. Taurasi

subbed in and hit her first shot a 3-pointer from the top of the key that made it 24-12 late in the first. Nigeria hung around and was only down 31-27 before Wilson, Young and Kelsey Plum took over. The Las Vegas Aces' trio scored the first 15 points, including eight by Wilson, during a 21-6 run to close the half that gave the Americans a 52-33 halftime cushion. The U.S. kept the spurt going in the third quarter, scoring the first 10 points to give the Nigerians no hopes of a comeback.

Promise Amukamara scored 19 to lead Nigeria. Amy Okonkwo added 17, and Ezinne Kalu 16. With this being the U.S. team's first game in Paris,

the contest drew some fellow Olympians including men's team players LeBron James, Bam Adebayo and Devin Booker as well as

American swimming greats Michael Phelps and Katie Ledecky. Members of the U.S. rowing team were also in attendance. □



United States' A'ja Wilson (9) shoots between Pallas Kunayi Akpanah (3) and Ezinne Kalu (23), of Nigeria, during a women's quarterfinal game at Bercy Arena at the 2024 Summer Olympics, Wednesday, Aug. 7, 2024, in Paris, France.

Associated Press

3 years after the NFL added a 17th game, the push for an 18th gets stronger

By JOSH DUBOW

AP Pro Football Writer

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) —

The debate about whether the NFL will expand the regular season once again seems to have been resolved and now it's a matter of how soon the league adds an 18th game.

Commissioner Roger Goodell has talked openly about it, union chief Lloyd Howell recently told the Washington Post that the NFLPA is open to doing it before the current collective bargaining agreement expires after the 2030 season and players seem resigned to the inevitability no matter how they might personally feel.

"I mean, I feel like we really ain't got no choice,



NFL commissioner Roger Goodell addresses reporters at the end of the NFL football owners meetings, Tuesday, March 26, 2024, in Orlando, Fla.

Associated Press

to be honest," said Seattle Seahawks veteran receiver

Tyler Lockett, who said he'd prefer adding another bye

week instead of another game to give TV networks

more broadcast windows without taxing the players with another game.

"I think that's more fair, but we know it's probably not going to end up like that. So, I mean you just kind of got to rock with the punches and just be able to go play." The NFL has desired adding more games for years, along with the increase in lucrative national television windows. The league increased the regular season from 14 games to 16 in 1978 and kept it there for decades.

But Goodell and the owners pushed through a 17th game in the latest CBA negotiations leading into the 2021 season and aren't content stopping there, with Goodell saying in the spring that going to 18 games remains a priority as long as it can be done without significantly impacting player safety.

"If you'd asked me that 10 years ago, I probably would be excited about it. Now, not so excited, but it is what it is," Raiders receiver Davante Adams said. "That's the thing that's special about football and why I really wanted to play football over basketball, is that I just feel like it's a different type of feeling knowing that you only have a limited amount of opportunities out there."

Adding another game to the season would add more broadcast windows. It also could push the Super Bowl to Presidents Day weekend with a federal holiday the day after the game. That would either require not adding a second bye week which most players said would be needed to play an extra game or moving the start of the season to Labor Day weekend, which the NFL has avoided since the 2000 season. While moving the Super Bowl to a long holiday weekend might have appeal to many fans who wouldn't have to go to work the next day, it could turn an NFL season into a seven-month marathon from the start of training camp to the final game. □



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